

Water Supply Protection Committee Meeting Minutes May 12, 2011

Committee members present: Lyons Witten, chair; Steve Mabee; Steve Dunn; Jesse Schwalbaum
Members not present: John Tobiason. Quorum was attained.

Town Employees present: Jason Skeels; Ellie Kurth

Guests/Members of the Public: Michael Krasnik; Francis Barry; Tammy Parks; Rich Spurgin

Meeting was held at the Town Room, Amherst Town Hall, starting at 8:44 am.

1) LW opened the meeting with a statement that the Committee had now had time to read the Tighe & Bond (T&B) reports on the Old Landfill and to review the new groundwater data published therein, that it was the goal of this meeting to discuss the data as it relates to the quality of the Town's drinking water supplies, to hear comments from the Public present, and if possible to draft a statement for Town Meeting on this subject.

2) At the Chair's suggestion, SM started the meeting giving an introduction for himself and listing his personal qualifications to assist the Committee (there had been some questioning of the committee members' qualifications in e-mails circulating about Town since our previous meeting).

3) Mr. Krasnik then started talking about a WMA Report completed by Garity & Miller (consulting engineers) in 1986, and how that report indicated monitoring wells now shown to be located outside the Zone II area of Lawrence Swamp Aquifer were in it in the 1986 report. He suggested that the Town had moved the Zone II to shed better light on the Old Landfill.

a) SM reminded Mr. Krasnik and the Committee that later work conducted by SEA Consultants for the Town included computer modeling of the Lawrence Swamp Aquifer and that the SEA results had been approved by DEP Division of Water Supply as the official Zone II area for this resource. The Garity & Miller work should be considered outdated and no longer applicable;

b) Mr. Krasnik questioned the accuracy of the Zone II line location;

c) SM suggested that Mr. Krasnik review the Zone II water supply files at DEP.

4) Mr. Krasnik expressed concern about elevated arsenic levels in sample SED-6.

a) LW noted that this sample was collected downgradient of the Old Landfill and is not near, or upgradient of, Town water supply areas.

5) Felicia Barry suggested that more frequent groundwater monitoring may correct a perception that there is a water quality problem in Amherst.

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a) SD responded that DEP is exhaustive in their review of the monitoring reports that have been completed and continued monitoring requirements exist and will be done on schedule.

b) LW noted that much collection and analysis of groundwater is done each year by the Town and reviewed each year by this Committee and that, to date, the

Committee is not concerned about the quality of the Town's drinking water supplies with relation to the Old Landfill. There are occasional issues, related to other topics, and they are addressed, but they do not point to a future looming problem with our drinking water supply.

6) SD then gave a brief introduction of himself to the meeting, as did JS and LW.

7) JS agreed that the Old Landfill cap is not up to current standards and more leachate may be generated as a result, but he also stated that this is not impacting water quality of Amherst's water supplies.

8) Tammy Parks lives on Harkness Road and expressed concern about her private wells and those of her neighbors due to the large pile of milled asphalt currently being stored north of the Transfer Station landfill.

a) EK indicated that she samples many of these private wells on an annual basis for the Town, that Ms. Park had received a letter requesting permission for the Town to do this sampling. Ms. Parks indicated she would be glad to have her wells sampled and she requested that Town Water be extended to the 13 homes on her street with private wells.

b) JS indicated that such an extension was in the water supply master plan and suggested that Ms. Parks send a written request for the extension to his attention. He indicated that the DPW likes to have water lines loop so there are no deadends, and that is would be a 6,600 foot extension to connect the water lines on each end of Harkness Road. This extension would also serve the houses on the north side of Harkness Rd which happen to be in Pehlam.

9) The Committee discussed a draft statement presented by LW which was also partially composed of comments submitted by member JT and read to the meeting (attached).

After some discussion and editing, a statement was agreed to by members present and approved for distribution to Town Meeting members prior to the May 16, 2011 session.

a) A copy of the final Statement is attached and was later posted to the Town's web site.

b) Committee agreed that the Chair, LW would read the Statement at the upcoming TM session and answer questions that TM members might have on this subject at that time.

10:20 am adjourn.

Minutes written and typed by Lyons Witten, Chair.

Not reviewed by the committee.

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e-mail sent by John Tobiason to Water Supply Protection Committee Members 5/11/11.

Lyons and fellow AWSP Committee Members:

I am sorry that I am not able to attend the committee meeting Thursday morning due to previously scheduled commitments at UMass. I'd like to share the following with the committee - publicly entering this e-mail into the record is fine with me.

My credentials to serve on the AWSP Committee: BS, MS and PhD degrees in Civil and Environmental Engineering; Registered professional Engineer (New Hampshire); Board Certified Environmental Engineer by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers; over 30 years of experience in teaching, research and consulting, mostly in the area of drinking water supply, treatment and distribution. Professor of CEE at UMass since 1987.

In my opinion, Town of Amherst employees have a long history of carefully controlling activities and monitoring environmental quality within the water supply areas for the surface water and ground water sources for the Town's drinking water (i.e, the associated watersheds and aquifer protection zones). The Town gathers data, reviews it, and complies with state regulations pertaining to drinking water supply, treatment and distribution. These activities, and my own review of available data, suggest to me that there is no reason for special concerns at this time regarding the quality of the Town of Amherst drinking water supplies. Specifically, I concur with Tighe and Bond and MA DEP that available data do not suggest any significant threat to the Town water supply wells in South Amherst related to the old Amherst landfill.

Collectively and individually, humans have a long history of undertaking activities that alter the "natural" quality of our environment (air, land, water, biota, etc.), usually as a consequence of some desired outcome of the activity (make products, grow food, self comfort, etc.) At times we make decisions to control those activities to limit the impacts on the environment due to concerns for environmental quality and/or human health. The old unlined, but capped, Amherst landfill is a good example. In hindsight, the practice of waste disposal in unlined landfills was not a good decision; we made rules/regulations to change that practice and to limit the negative impacts of that former practice, including careful monitoring and controls to limit potential human exposure. Any proposed activity on the site of the old landfill will require a permit from MA DEP. The process of applying for that permit will reveal potential risks, and if the activity is to move ahead, actions will be required to control those risks. The language in the most recent DEP letter of approval for the final closure plan makes it very clear that activities that might compromise the integrity of the landfill cap will not be allowed. I feel confident that the formal review process, and the open public forum nature of our Town, will result in appropriate, rational decisions being made.

I look forward to learning about the content of the committee meeting at a later time.

Sincerely,
John Tobiason

UNANIMOUS STATEMENT FROM THE TOWN OF AMHERST WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION COMMITTEE REGARDING ARTICLE 24

In our opinion, Town of Amherst employees have a long history of carefully controlling activities and monitoring environmental quality within the water supply areas for the surface water and ground water sources for the Town's drinking water (i.e, the associated watersheds and aquifer protection zones). The Town gathers data, reviews

it, and complies with state regulations pertaining to drinking water supply, treatment and distribution. These activities, and our own review of available data, suggest to us that there is no reason for special concerns at this time regarding the quality of the Town of Amherst drinking water supplies. The integrity of the old landfill cap needs to be monitored and maintained for environmental reasons but it is not a threat to Amherst's public water supplies. Specifically, we concur with Tighe and Bond and MA DEP that available data do not suggest any significant threat to the Town water supply wells in South Amherst related to the old Amherst landfill.

We endorse the Town and DEP's continued monitoring of areas down gradient of the old Amherst landfill.

Amherst Water Supply Protection Committee

Lyons Witten, Committee Chair

Steve Mabee

Steve Dunn

Jesse Schwalbaum

John Tobiason (Contributed to statement but not present for vote)